

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4244

LIMDIS

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

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SUBJ: SOVIET VIEWS ON ME

REF: AMMAN 1760

1. SUMMARY. MFA DEPUTY CHIEF NEAR EAST COUNTRIES
DEPARTMENT PYRLIN TOLD POTICIAL COUNSELOR ON MARCH 26
THAT BREZHNEV'S ME TRIP WILL PROBABLY NOT TAKE PLACE
UNTIL AUTUMN. THE SOVIETS, HE SAID, ARE EXPECTING VISITS
FROM ARAFAT AND IRAQ'S SADDAM HUSSEIN IN THE SECOND HALF
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OF APRIL. ON RECENT VISITS BY SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY

DELEGATION AND MEPC REPRESENTATIVE VINOGRADOV TO JORDAN, PHRLIN CONFIRMED SOVIETS HAD URGED JORDANIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, BUT HE DENIED THAT USSR RECOGNIZES JORDANIAN AUTHORITY OVER THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK. PYRLIN AVOIDED ANY REFERENCE TO THE SECRETARY'S UNSUCCESSFUL ME MISSION, BUT WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR RESUMING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE SAID SOVIETS DID NOT EXPECT MEPC OUTLOOK TO BE CLEAR UNTIL AT LEAST MID-APRIL. PYRLIN CLAIMED TO HAVE NO CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF PRESIDENT ASAD'S PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT SYRIAN-PLO MILITARY-POLITICAL COMMAND, BUT HE ASSERTED THE SYRIAN PROPOSAL MAY BE DIRECTED AT COUNTERING IRAQI EFFORTS TO CAST BAGHDAD AS THE SOLE DEFENDER AND SPOKESMAN FOR PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. PYRLIN SAID THERE WAS NOTHING NEW ON SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS. HE CLAIMED THE SOVIETS COULD SEE NO REAL BENEFIT FROM RE-ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH TEL AVIV UNTIL ISRAEL ADOPTS A "MORE FLEXIBLE" ME POLICY. PHYLIN HAD NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE TO SAY ABOUT KING FAISAL'S ASSASSINATION, BUT HE APPEARED SKEPTICAL THAT THE ASSASSIN WAS ACTING ALONE. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CALL ON MARCH 26 BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON YE. D. PYRLIN, MFA CHIEF, NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DIVISION, PYRLIN COMMENTED ON RECENT SOVIET-JORDANIAN TALKS AND PROVIDED CURRENT SOVIET VIEWS ON SEVERAL MIDDLE EAST TOPICS.

3. SOVIET VISITS TO JORDAN. PYRLIN SAID THE SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION'S JORDANIAN VISIT, IN WHICH HE PARTICIPATED, HAD BEEN INTERESTING BUT PRIMARILY NON-POLITICAL SINCE HEAD OF DELEGATION MATCHANOV WAS NOT POLITICAN PRIMARILY, BUT RATHER A "PURE SCIENTIST." VINOGRADOV'S VISIT, HE NOTED, HAD OCCURRED JUST AT THE END OF THE PARLIAMENTARY VISIT AND HAD ALSO BEEN USEFUL IN ENABLING SOVIETS TO UNDERSTAND HUSSEIN'S POSITION. THERE HAD BEEN ONLY GENERAL DISCUSSION OF JORDANIAN AND SOVIET VIEWS ON THE ME AND GENEVA DURING BOTH VISITS, PYRLIN SAID. THE MAIN TOPIC VINOGRADOV TOOK UP WITH JORDANIAN OFFICIALS, ACCORDING TO PYRLIN, WAS URGING OF GOJ PARTICIPATION IN THE MEPC. HE HAD POINTED OUT, PYRLIN CLAIMED, THAT JORDAN AS A MIDDLE EAST STATE

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SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE BECAUSE THE MEPC WOULD BE A VENUE TO DISCUSS "ALL ISSUES" IN THE REGION. IN THIS REGARD, JORDAN WOULD BE DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH SUCH QUESTIONS AS THE ISRAELI-JORDANIAN SOUTHERN BORDER AND JURISDICTION OVER THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE GULF OF AQABA. ACCORDING TO VINOGRADOV, PYRLIN SAID, JORDAN SHOWED "SOME UNDERSTANDING" OF SOVIET VIEWS. ASKED ABOUT JORDAN'S ROLE TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS, PYRLIN IN ESSENCE DENIED

THE ACCURACY OF THE AR RAYY REPORT (REFTEL). THE USSR, HE SAID, DOES NOT RECOGNIZE JORDAN'S AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT THE WEST BANK. THE USSR RECOGNIZES THE RABAT DECISIONS. THIS MEANS, HE SAID, THAT ANY LAND LIBERATED FROM ISRAELI CONTROL SHOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PALESTINIANS.

4. GENEVA CONFERENCE. PYRLIN WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. MOSCOW, HE SAID, DOES NOT HAVE A DEFINITE PICTURE OF ARAB POSITIONS. THE SITUATION WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO CLARIFY. MID-APRIL SEEMED THE EARLIEST THT ANY REAL INDICATION ABOUT MEPC PROPOSECTS COULD BE EXPECTED. IN THIS CONNECTION, PYRLIN ASKED WHETHER WE HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT A POSSIBLE ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN CONNECTION WITH THE FAISAL FUNERAL AND SAID THAT IF SUCH A CONFERERENCE DID TAKE PLACE, ONE RESULT MIGHT BE A CLARIFICATION OF ARAB VIEWS ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

PALESTINIANS. PYRLIN SAID THE SOVIETS ARE PRESENTLY DISCUSSING AN ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW. NO SPECIFIC DATE HAS BEEN SET, BUT A VISIT IN LATE APRIL IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. PRYLIN SAID THE SCHEDULING OF ARAFAT'S VISIT IS BEING COMPLECATED BY NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT DATES IN APRIL FOR A VISIT BY IRAQ'S SADDAM HUSSEIN. ASKED ABOUT VINOGRADOV'S TALKS WITH ARAFAT IN BEIRUT, PYRLIN CHARACTERIZED THEM AS GENERAL DISCUSSIONS. FROM HIS REPORTS, PYRLIN SAID, THERE APPEARED NO GREAT CHANGE IN PALESTINIAN POSITIONS. IN THIS REGARD, PYRLIN, AS HE HAS IN PAST CONVERSATIONS, ALLUDED TO THE PLO'S LACK OF UNITY, SAYING IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND "ONE VOICE" WHO CAN SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS. IT IS SIGNIFICANT IN THIS REGARD THAT ARAFAT MET VINOGRADOV IN THE COMPANY OF A NUMBER OF PLO MEMBERS AND EVEN IN MOSCOW IT IS NEVER POSSIBLE FOR THE

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SOVIETS TO SEE ARAFAT ALONE. ALL SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS WITH ARAFAT, HE CLAIMED, HAVE TAKEN PLACE WHEN THE PLO CHIEF IS ACCOMPANIED BY AT LEAST ONE AND NORMALLY MORE MEMEBERS OF HIS ENTROURAGE.

6. ASKED ABOUT THE SYRIAN PROPOSAL FOR A PLO/SYRIAN JOINT POLITICAL-MILITARY COMMAND, PYRLIN ATTRIBUTED ASAD'S IDEA TO THE TENSE STUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND SYRIA. IRAQ, HE NOTED, DESIRES TO SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS AND ASAD'S PROPOSAL MAY BE SEEN AS AN EFFORT BY THE SYRIANS TO GAIN SOME ASCENDANCY OVER THE IRAQIS ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. AS TO THE STATUS OF THE PROPOSAL, PYRLIN CLAIMED THE SOVIETS HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA ABOUT JUST WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

7. SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC TALKS, PYRLIN SAID THE TALKS ARE SUSPENDED AND THE SOVIETS ARE AWAITING AN ANSWER FROM THE EGYPTIANS ABOUT THEIR RESUMPTION. AMBASSADOR ISMAIL WILL RETURN TO MOSCOW MARCH 27, HE SAID, AND THE SOVIETS EXPECT HIM TO BRING BACK EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON THE NEXT SESSION. PYRLIN SAID HE THOUGHT THE TALKS MIGHT RESUME IN LATE APRIL OR MAY. THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES REMAINING, HE SAID, ARE EGYPTIAN DEBT SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN JOINT PROJECTS INTO THE NEW USSR FIVE-YEAR PLAN. ASKED WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING NEW ON BREZHNEV'S TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST, PYRLIN SAID IT APPEARED THE VISIT COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AUTUMN.

8. SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS. PYRLIN CLAIMED THERE IS NOTHING NEW ON SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS. HE DOES NOT FORESEE AN IMMEDIATE PROSPECT FOR CHANGE, HE SAID. MOSCOW FEELS THAT THERE IS NOTHING IMPORTANT TO BE GAINED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH TEL AVIV BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S NEGATIVE POSITION. ONLY SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD MAKE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS DESIRABLE, HE SAID. NONETHELESS, PYRLIN NOTED, THERE ARE SOVIET-ISRAELI CONTACTS ON THE LEVEL OF "SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS" (HE MENTIONED THE SOVIET-ISRAELI FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY).
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9. DEATH OF KING FAISAL. THE KING'S DEATH, PYRLIN SAID, WAS A SURPRISE. IT WAS VERY STRANGE FOR THE USSR, AND HE INDICATED MOSCOW WAS INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT "FORCES" WERE BEHIND THE ASSASSINATION. WHILE PYRLIN GAVE NO INDICATION ABOUT HOW THE SOVIETS VIEW FAISAL' DEATH, PYRLIN SAID IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY OCCUPY THE ARAB WORLD FOR SOME TIME AND WOULD PROBABLY DELAY ARAB DECISIONS ABOUT FUTRUE COORDINATED PLANS.
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